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Garden Notes

Number 23



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THE show of the American Peony Society was held in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in June, and it brought together the greatest quantity of fine Peonies ever exhibited at any one time and place. The attendance was very large, and according to the report of the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce the exhibit was a great financial success. Next year the Society will meet in Peoria, Illinois, and the committee from that city which is arranging for the show, has promised to do everything in its power to give us an opportunity for an even more effective display.

I know by experience that the members of the Peony Society who attend National Shows, appreciate visiting fine gardens, and I wish that Peoria were near enough to the city of Rockford, so that the committee could promise everyone of us, who attends the show, a visit to the beautiful garden of G. J. Boehland of that city. A visit to his garden was the culminating event of my trip to the Freeport Iris Show this spring, and I am sure that every garden lover would be delighted with a visit to this beautiful and romantic garden. Of course, I do not have the authority to invite anyone, but if any of my readers ever receives an invitation to visit this garden, I hope he will avail himself of the opportunity. The garden covers the top, side and foot of a bluff on the Rock River, and has the effect of an old world garden, such as you would expect to find in Europe along the banks of the Rhine, or on the terraced shores of Sicily.

The Fort Wayne Peony Show will be remembered for the great number of excellent seedlings which

were exhibited. Although the new rules of the Peony Society did not allow the judges to make any awards, yet I believe finer Peonies were exhibited than some of those which have previously been awarded the coveted certificates and medals. If these same seedlings can be shown in as good form at two future National Peony Shows, I am sure that some of them will receive the highest honors which the judges are allowed to give.

I trust that the Directors of the American Peony Society will modify the present ruling at a very early meeting, and arrange to give some official form of recognition to each person who displays a seedling of merit.

The show was also remarkable for its wonderful display of Japanese Peonies, and I am confident that there were more excellent Japanese blooms on display than I have seen in all the National Shows during the past ten years. I believe that visitors to the show will agree with me that Tamatbako and Tokio are the two best pink Japanese Peonies whose names are not contested by more than one variety. It is true that Ama-no-Sode deserves to rank with them, but, unfortunately, there are three different excellent Japanese Peonies, each one claiming to be the true Ama-no-Sode. Kelway's Magnificence is a Japanese Peony with a lighter pink color tone than the three I have already named, and as it is not confused with any other variety, it will probably maintain its place as one of the good but not super-excellent Japanese varieties.

I was quite fortunate in having several three-year-old plants of Tamatbako in bloom this year, and much to my surprise I found that this Peony and Isani Gidui are most excellent landscape varieties, for both of them produced an abundance of

bloom on the laterals, and gave a splendid effect on the landscape during a period of nearly two weeks.

Isani Gidui out-classed all the other white Japanese varieties and I believe there is no doubt but that it stands at the head of the list. Fortunately its name is not confused, so a purchaser runs very little risk of receiving an inferior Peony when ordering this variety from any reputable grower. Snow Wheel and White Lady are, I believe, the two next best white Japanese varieties and while both of them are rather scarce, they are more easily obtained than Isani Gidui. Eileen Kelway and Yesso are two Japanese varieties whose blooms are so very, very much alike that I have been tempted many times to say that a single variety has been given two names, which is undoubtedly a better situation than that of having two different varieties claiming the same name. Both of these open a very light flesh pink and quickly change to white, so that they should be classed as white varieties rather than as pink. I am sure there is a place in our gardens for this Peony under either of its names.

In red Japanese Peonies, Mikado is by far the best known, for it has been on the market for over thirty years and is still comparatively scarce. It produces excellent bloom on its laterals and I believe that all Peony authorities are willing to recommend it. The Fort Wayne Show demonstrated that Fuyajo is the very best of the dark red Japanese Peonies. It is in such excellent demand that anyone who has it for sale is justified in holding it at a good price. Some Ganoko is probably the next best red variety in commerce, having a very attractive cup-shaped bloom, different in shape from any Japanese Peony I have previously mentioned. Although its bloom is in some respects more attractive than that found upon Mikado, I believe

that Mikado produces a better effect upon the landscape for its laterals branch wider and longer, and the flowers are not so hidden by the foliage.

Mr. Babcock of Jamestown, New York, has a red Japanese seedling which is probably in the class with Fuyajo. Some Ganoko and Mikado, and, in fact, may be superior to some of them. I saw just one bloom of it for a few minutes and I am very anxious to see it again next year, for that one good look at it so impressed me with its beauty that I believe it has a future in our list of most excellent red Japs. In my own garden, a new red variety, Soshi, which I imported five years ago, gave everyone connected with our garden a genuine thrill, for we now have five large three-year-old plants of it and every one of them was filled with extremely fine cup-shaped red Japanese bloom, of good size and form. The foliage and carriage as well as the blooms on these five plants were outstanding in their excellence and attracted the favorable attention of visitors. I never expect to see a better display of one Japanese variety than we saw on those plants this year, but unfortunately, there were very few laterals, so the blooming season was limited to about a week. If, on older plants, the blooming season is extended to two weeks or more, I shall rank this new variety as one of the most valuable Japanese Peonies in the world. However, as in the case of Mr. Babcock's seedling, I am very anxious to see Soshi in bloom again next year, for a single season is far too short a time in which to form a permanent judgment as to the value of any Peony.

Another red Japanese Peony of very high grade is Torpilleur, whose beauty and charm have grown upon me during the past ten years. I am finding that, like Tamatbako, Isani Gidui and Tokio, three and four year old plants of this variety give much

finer bloom than younger plants. The demand for Torpilleur is increasing, for both in color and form it is different from the other red Japanese varieties. Unfortunately, there is an inferior variety bearing this name, but I believe that it is not very widely distributed. Akalu, Kino Kimo, Kamenō Kero-gama and Knight of the Thistle are all very satisfactory red Japanese varieties, which, I believe, will be appreciated more every year, and I shall not be surprised if Knight of the Thistle eventually attains a position near the top of the list.

For several years Noonday has been considered the best of the rose color Japanese varieties, but a new one from England carrying the name Goddess, bids fair to eclipse it, for this year in my garden the new arrival excelled it in size, beauty and substance. For landscape effect, the Japanese variety, Kumagoe, whose blooms have a deep rosy mauve color, is perhaps as good a variety as there is in the world. When this Peony is in full bloom its garden effect is very much more like that of a shrub than of an herbaceous plant, but, while it is most excellent for the landscape, its blooms have no value as show flowers. The new Japanese varieties, Hinode-Sakai and Hano-No-Sato, which I have very recently imported, are in the class with Kumagoe, as both of them are very attractive when used on the landscape. These last two varieties can well be used together on the same estate, in different locations, of course, for Hano-No-Sato is an extremely early Japanese variety of a deep Tyrian rose color, in which the guards are darker than the center, while Hinode-Sakai is an extremely late variety of a deep rose color. These two landscape varieties cover the entire blooming season, and in my garden both of them were objects of great interest to all visitors. The colors in Hano-No-Sato

are somewhat harsh in the show-room, but I know of nothing which is more striking for color when used in a mass planting.

At the meeting of the members of the American Peony Society, a committee was appointed to study the many Japanese varieties now on the market, with a view to getting the list of names clarified. I am sure we shall all await their report with a great deal of interest, for Japanese varieties are being appreciated very much more than in former years.

A few years ago Mr. Lemoine introduced a new rose shaped Peony and named it Coquette. It has been an exceedingly slow variety to develop, being the very last one to bloom each season. Its color is cream, not cream white, but pure deep rich cream, sometimes with a glint of pink. Every other cream variety I had previously known would fade to white in the sunshine, but this variety remained cream throughout the season. The cream color is so deep that the buds, which are of only medium size, have appeared very much like the buds of Ophelia roses and we noticed this season that the fully opened flowers were very much more like roses than those of any other variety of Peony.

Mr. Lemoine is evidently deeply interested in producing a genuine cream Peony, for two of his later seedlings, Madame Escary and Odalisque, are permanent cream also, as both of them held the rich cream color throughout the entire season. I do not yet know which of the three, Coquette, Madame Escary or Odalisque is the best, but every one of them is very interesting. The fact that they all produced such good bloom this cool season, leads me to believe that it is probable that they should be planted in partial shade.

The readers of my Garden Notes may grow weary of my many references to Phyllis Kelway, but, all things considered, it is one of the best Peonies I have ever seen. It is very large, of semi-rose type, the petals are very loosely arranged, and it shows the stamens in a most entrancing manner. The quality of the petals is so fine, the substance so great, and the finish so perfect, that the reflection of the light gives the effect of different shades of pink. This variety does not multiply rapidly and so it will not soon become a very cheap Peony. Everyone who is fortunate enough to possess it, should certainly appreciate it, for I know of no other variety which exhibits the same excellent qualities in this particular manner.

Le Cygne, fortunately, seems to do its best every season, whether we swelter in the heat or enjoy perfect weather as we did this year. It undoubtedly deserves its high rating, and will increase rather than diminish in popularity.

When I visited Mr. Lemoine in France, last year, he told me that his new variety, Alice Harding which he first sold me under its original name Amitie Americaine, had proved to be an even better Peony than his Le Cygne, but the new variety has not yet equaled Le Cygne in beauty in my garden. I have, however, so much faith, in Mr. Lemoine's judgment, that I am confidently expecting to see the world's best Peony blooms on my three or four year old plants of Alice Harding next year. I well remember that Mrs. Edward Harding did not seem to be an outstanding variety for a few years after it was awarded the one hundred dollar prize, but as we see it now on three and four year old roots, we can appreciate its value to the fullest extent.

The world wants more red Peonies and I took particular care to notice the quality of every red variety which bloomed during the season. Philippe Rivoire stood out above all other red varieties even more than in any former season, and we have found that a group of three or four year old plants of this variety is most valuable on the landscape. Its main blooms came early and remained for several days even after the laterals opened. We had some beautiful flowers on the laterals which were in good condition on July 1, which gave this variety an extremely long blooming season, longer, in fact, than that of any other red variety, not even excepting the famous Cherry Hill and the almost equally excellent William F. Turner.

Sops of Wine (Secor) was the very latest red variety to bloom in my garden, and this year it opened its blooms very well and was of an exceedingly dark rich red color. If it can acquire the habit of opening its blooms as well every season as it did this year, I am sure that there is a place for it in all our gardens. However, I have noticed during several previous seasons that its blooms never entirely opened and the fact that it made such a good record this season during the cool weather leads me to believe that this variety should probably be planted where it gets shade during at least part of the day. I shall be very glad to have the experience of other growers with this variety which is not yet widely distributed.

The false Philippe Rivoire, which we have labeled Benoit, also made a good record for itself this year and it is possible that it deserves a place in commerce. When it first opens it is nearly as good as the genuine Philippe Rivoire, but it does not retain its color as well nor as long as the true variety. It is quite probable that many Peony

enthusiasts have the false variety in their gardens and do not know it, for the false variety was sent to me both from France and from a grower in the United States.

All Peonies seemed to be able to withstand storms this season better than usual, for even Jubilee, the finest decorative white Peony in the world, was able to hold up its blooms through two or three storms, a feat which surprised us very much, as Jubilee's weak stems have been its only failing. The blooms of Jubilee are of great value as cut flowers, but the plant itself has no landscape value. Midsummer Night's Dream, a sister plant of Jubilee, produced better and larger white blooms than ever before, and the slight tone of yellow added greatly to their beauty. Our season was not only long, but it was noticeably cool and it is quite probable that the coolness accounted for its extreme length.

Germaine Bigot has long been a favorite of mine, but I never realized its full value until this season. We had a planting of one hundred and thirty-five three year old plants all in one block, and its habit during the entire season was perfect. I believe that not a single bloom ever touched the ground, and the quality of the bloom was so great that it deserved a place in every pink collection that we entered at the show. It is surprising how very much it resembles the new variety, President Wilson, and, when well grown, it is not greatly inferior to that expensive variety.

A few famous varieties like Martha Bulloch, Nina Secor, and Enchanteresse did not produce as good blooms as usual, and it has occurred to me that these three varieties probably thrive better in extremely warm weather than they do in cool and

comfortable weather such as we had this season.

I will be particularly glad to hear from other growers of their experience with Nina Secor. During the three seasons 1921, 1922, and 1923, this variety gave us splendid white blooms which we thought deserved to rank with Enchanteresse, and possibly even with Le Cygne. In 1924, and 1925 the buds and blooms were all frozen so that we had no opportunity to judge its quality, and this year it behaved very much like Martha Bulloch and Enchanteresse, and so we have not been able to see a representative bloom of this variety for three years, a fact we very much regret. We hope that, during the last three years it has, in other gardens, displayed the same quality and beauty which we saw in it in 1921, 1922 and 1923, and letters from other growers and amateurs telling of its behavior in their gardens will be appreciated.

The present Peony season has been by far the best I have ever known, and as I look back upon it, I am already interested in the blooms for next season, and, as I meet other Peony enthusiasts, the conversation invariably turns first, to our views on the quality of blooms we saw this year and then to a discussion of the things we expect to see next year. The great seedling class which we saw at the Fort Wayne Show, leads us to believe that there are some especially good things awaiting us in the future, and, of course, like every other enthusiast, I am hoping that one of the very best of these new arrivals will make its appearance in my garden.

